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AAAA!AAAA!AAA!AAAAA

A
SPECIMEN
Of a FEW, NOT UNUSEFUL,
MEDITATIONS.

AAAA!AAAA!AAAA!AAAAA

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SPECIMEN

OF A Few, NOT UNUSUAL

MEDICIONS



*Resolved Chearfulness in Dangers; with the
Reasons thereof: Or,*

MENS TENDENS AD METAM:

BEING A

SPECIMEN

Of a FEW, NOT UNUSEFUL,

MEDITATIONS.

By the Reverend Mr. EDWARD BISSE, A. M.
Vicar of *Portbury*, &c. near *Bristol*, during the
Easter Week, whilst in the Messengers hands, &c.
Anno, 1718.

*They that know thy Name, will put their Trust in thee:
For thou, Lord, hast never failed them that seek thee.
Psalm ix.*

L O N D O N.

Printed for T. BICKERTON, at the Crown in
Partr-ner-Row, 1721. (Price Six-pence.

Resolved cheerfully in Danger; with the
Respect thereof: Or

MENS TENDENS AD ALIAM:

BEING A

SPECIMEN

Of a Few, not Uncommon

MEDITATIONS.

By the Reverend Mr. Edward Bisse, A. M.
Vicar of Portney, &c. near Bristol, during the
Fifth Week, whilst his Majesty's hands, &c.
were, 1718.



These have known thy Name, and their Time is thee:
For thou, Lord, hast never failed them that seek thee.
Psalm ix.

L O N D O N :

Printed for T. BICKNAPTON, at the Crown in
Fleet-Street, 1721. (Price Six-pence.)

Chearfulness in DANGERS.

*On my being hurried into the Messenger's
strong Room, (immediately) the Night
I was brought up to Town, April
the 15th.*



O O D God! and am I thus rap't
! from the pleasures of the Coun-
try, into the Darkness and Hor-
rours of a Goal? well; however
I live yet and could I but have
respite here, to ripen (to use
the French Kings Expressions, in
relation to a young Cardinals being sent to the *Bastile*)
into a due composure of Thought†, since the infinite
good Being, has so ordered things, I should think it one
of the happiest Moments of my Life: 'Tis an odd
Room; I have read of *Lollard's Tower*, *Bonner's*
Cole-House, and the place called *Diph* by *Marseilles*,
where 'tis said the Inquisition Tormentors wreck
their Spleen, on the unchangeably Religious; now
possibly this Den may be as bad as any of them;
As for things

† Being without due Rest for several Weeks.

things distant in Time or Place, strike more on the Imagination; but perhaps present Evils are altogether as shocking; the Dimensions of my Mansion, I find are scarce Eight Foot Square; yet in this scantiness of room, if my Enemies can prevail, I am sure, I am to begin to act the greatest, and most Momentous part of my Life; I mean an handsome and decent preparation for Death; but why should I complain for want of Room, the same, or less, will contain my unactive Part, when Dead? If I am then for Life, this scene won't last long; I shall soon breath free air; but if otherwise; and nothing can satisfy my implacable Adversaries; but what they call an everlasting farewell from 'em; what small loss shall I be, by this short Confinement? My Soul will soon be enlarg'd, with pinions exalted fly aloft; and so the All-wise disposer of our future ubi's, will but permit it, to cast a pitying Eye on the Unfortunate Tempers of my unhappy Persecutors, and allot it at the same time, some station to do good in, I shall still be at rest; Rest! I shall be all Activity, Enjoy Pleasure and Bliss, commensurate to the utmost extent of my Capacity! and I humbly pray God, the Venom of their canker'd, and ungenerous Souls, who were the cause of my sending here, may gradually wear off (may my Blood, if (nothing else can, extinguish their Malice, and so be an occasion of their becoming Christians) that so his grace preventing 'em, they may habitually co-operate with it, so as to soar upwards at last likewise: These thoughts, please me; but I find I am not all Soul; yet; this lonesome Cubb strikes my sight! but why should I repine, my Glasse, perchance, being almost run; no larger, nor perhaps, much better a pavilion contain'd, even the beginnings of that, great Emperour Charles the 5th! and what if there are Barrs, and Bolts, and Locks to it; so they cannot lock

lock God out, nor bar me from looking in upon my own self, and there examining very Tendon and Fibre of my own Internal Fabrick; each single spring, and motion of my own Soul, that I may become wiser, better, and more ready for Death, and another Life, for it; I'm still the winner. Whatever the giddy multitude, may be apt to think otherwise!

Most infinitely-good-three-one, let me implore thy aid therefore, tho' my Enemies contriv'd this Mischief, my Sins no doubt on't were what have deserv'd it; forgive me then, Blessed Lord, through the Blood of my Redeemer, and so penetrate this dark cavern with thy all-cheering Influence, as may speak Peace to my Soul, and support and animate my languid Spirits: Thy eyes are over all the Earth; even Hell is not hid from thee, and the most secret and distant, as well as the most, open and conjoin'd objects are equally, present to thee; let not this gloomy Place, then be without in due share of thy all-mighty and all-good presence, to check me in the least tendency to obliquity, so to enliven me under these effects of it; and may it thou endue me with such a decency of behaviour, as may soften my adversaries; such a Power of words and thought, as may baffle all unreasonable gain-sayers; but with all, such a Resolution and Courage, as never to be cast down, or afraid, or to desert Truth, and this I beg, for Jesus Christ his sake. Amen.

On

On Trust in God.

TH E surprizing hurry of Affairs I have a long time bin in; how surrounded; almost always, for many Years, with nothing else, but what other People call Plagues! what adds to the rage of my Enemies, is, that I bear all these, not only with Content, but an unusual Alacrity; and my Friends too, are surprized at this, which, they are sometimes pleased to call, Obstinacy of my Temper; but why so, is a resolved Perseverance, in what is Right, and Just, Obstinacy; and tho' I am not always Fortunate in the Prosecution on it, must I therefore be Discontented? No surely: does any thing come by chance; or rather, do not all things proceed from the first mover, either Authoritatively, or Permissively; without whose knowledge, not a Sparrow, or an Hair, can fall to the Ground? Certainly this is true: So, that the Difference between me, and most other Persons, is this; by reason of the outward Gayety of my behaviour, they fancy I never think; and so I take it, are mistaken; whilst, on the other hand, they would fain pass for thoughtful Creatures; whereas really they are not; the Truth is, notions float idely, and wantonly, like Shuttlecocks on the Water, upon too many Peoples minds; which, although true, and they believe 'em so, yet they never have thought so long of 'em, and to such good purpose, as out of them, to have reaped all the real, and solid Advantages, as naturally flow from them, upon

upon a long, full and thorough Disquisition; for instance, ask any Person, whether he believes a God, and trusts in him accordingly; he possibly might think the Question, almost an Affront; when but search the matter to the bottom, he need not be so Disgusted; he only does not disbelieve a God, and his Providence; for were the matter otherwise, and he had thoughts of those notions so long, and so close, as to have extracted all their Powers out of 'em, so that they were never without their full force, Efficacy, and Energy on his mind; no Course, no Accidents of Life, how harsh soever, but what he would be calm in; so that here lies the Difference; by other Persons affecting to pass for thoughtful, when, any Accidents of Life happen to them, and which require Strength, and force of Mind, and they act their part handsomely and decently in them; 'tis no more than what is expected from them, out of their sedate, and seemingly Cogitabund Temper; and when they manage awkwardly, and in such cases as mine, timorously, they are presently tried-out upon, with, who would have thought it? whereas on the Reverse, guessing at my want of thought, by the Aiery Turn of my behaviour, should I, in such cases, as are matter of Fear, and Terrour to others, act with that resolution, as becomes what we call, a grave through-paced, well-wayed Christian, and which part they think, none but such an one, could act, decorously in; People are equally at a surprise; and who would have thought it, comes in, on my side too; but much more to my Advantage: This now is my present case. How the Messenger, and his Wife stare at me! they look upon me, I see, as already executed, and my head dangling on a Pole; and this now is the reason, the fellow asks me so seriously, whether, I han't bin Mad? for as that bright Gen-

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tleman

tleman Mr. *Ridpath* is pleas'd to top Lunacy on me,
 so these gentry, I find, can by no means imagine,
 any Person, unless touch'd, could act a part so mer-
 ry, and unconcern'd, under Circumstances so fatal :
 Here then, Blessed Lord, to thee alone is my Soul
 open ; when others have been Dead (for what else
 is sleep, but at least the younger Brother of Death!)
 in night's silent recesses, how often have I put such
 cases to my self, with a thorough, consideration,
 how I could practically behave under them? and
 with what pleasure, have I expatiated in my Rural
 Retirement (I took pleasure in thinking, and which
 was heightn'd too, because I imagin'd, others did
 not think so) God, and all his attributes, being the
 Blisful Field of my Joyous Meditations ; which
 train of thinking, how have I grasp'd, 'till with
 eagerness I have almost exhausted the last drop, and
 div'd to the very bottom of that Lucid Fountain ?
 how lost, how absorb'd in thought, has my javish'd
 Soul bin? when bringing up with me, all those
 useful Theorems, those speculative, and practical
 inferences, as sweetly glide from that Grand Occan,
 that out-lined, out-strech'd, immense fluid, a clear
 and adequate view and contemplation of the infinite
 being; such reflections as these, how often have they
 started up? Now thou art at the Fountain head,
 fully quench thy thirst; draw out, now thou hast
 leisure, the most refreshing Cordials; God perhaps
 may place thee, in such Circumstances, as thou
 may'st have occasion to make use of'em: And now :
 ever blessed be his great, and ever reverible Name!
 I cannot but think, the time is at hand, when all my
 Resolutions drawn up into one grand Platoon, will
 be, but just sufficient, to repel my Enemies, and carry
 me off gracefully; and happy may I think my self,
 that I have thus thought; so as to be able, modestly
 to command, at any time, and on any occasion, the
 Arke

Arke of Divine Hope, and Confidence in God; for by this means, now I trust, I shall easily step into her, to waft me on Chearfully; whereas such Persons, who would pass for Thoughtful, on the World; and who please, and Pride themselves in that Caprice, even to that Degree, that they think the Opinion on't Sufficient, without thinking indeed; i. e. without thinking to the very bottom, and depth of things; (and in this case of God's All-sufficiency, with the never failing Props, as upon a due Penetration arise from it, for the utmost support of a mans Spirits, in the Dangerousest Crisis's) how must they Blush, after all their Parade, when they come to be Tried; and how Languish with secret Grief, at the want within? They may see the Arke of happy trust, and invigorating reliance on God, playing at a distance, on the uncertain Surface of the Water; but how shall they reach Her? For want of considering the Divine Being beforehand, to the utmost Depths, and making all the notions of his Blessed Attributes lie smooth, even, intelligibly and orderly, on their Minds, so as they might never be at a loss, for the most Salutiferous Julips drawn from this healthful Fountain, and for want of putting cases beforehand, and that not talkatively, but by a silent and clear view within, and bringing things home to themselves, and satisfactorily scrutinizing, how they could act under them, *Quid valeant humeri, Quid ferre recusant*; why both the Hand wherewith, and the Tackle whereby, they should grasp, holdfast, and bring within their reach, this Vessel of true Faith, and sure Confidence in God, are entirely out of the way; so that, alas, how are they Shock'd, whenever they are to enter, on any Field of Combat, with any staring danger? *hinc illa Lacrima!* to be beforehand, in such cases therefore; knowing in any emergency, how thoughtless 'tis to

cry out for, or expect help, unless preassured, or
 preprovided beforehand; how useful has been my
 Retirement; in my solitary Expatiations, for how
 have I thus Reasoned? Dost thou believe a God?
 Yes; but what is implied in that vast Idea? All
 Perfection; what are such; All-power, All-good-
 ness, All-knowledge, All-presence? Which attri-
 butes alone, if but considered to the Bottom, I
 would judicially conclude, were abundantly ena-
 bling any honest Man, in an honest Cause, and pur-
 suing it by honest Means, not only to undertake
 and engage in it, but contentedly, nay, cheerfully,
 undauntedly, and heroically to go thro' with it,
 so as even to out-dare, nay, dispise, and contemn
 Death it self in any brave Design, provided all the
 Force and Powers implied in those Ideas, were but
 constantly within the ken of that Person, as that
 he might mentally and practically have Recourse
 to them; for Instance, the universal Vacuum, or
 infinite Space, we suppose is God's Sensorium, I
 think, a very learned and ingenious Gentleman calls
 it so; that by, and in which God acts; you ima-
 gine him then All-present, *i. e.* every where;
 what's that? Why, in each and every Individual,
 and particular Punctum or Point of that Space; are
 you not then either standing or lying (I am sure
 existing) in some one Point of it? In that very
 Point therefore, wheresoever you are, either in the
 torrid or frozen Zone, in the Poets Language; or in
 the utmost parts of the Earth, in that of the *Psal-*
mist, God's infinite Presence is with you; he is in,
 through, about you, and every where surrounds
 you; and as his immense Being is thus continually,
 and each, and every Moment with you, as to his
 Presence; so is he equally Liberal and Communi-
 cative of his other Glories also, his Goodness, Pow-
 er and Knowledge to you; for God is not divi-
 ded,

ded, he is whole, and all, every where, and in every Place; his All-presence does not exclude his All-power, nor his Omniscience, his All-goodness; but wheresoever you are, these four bright Attributes are undiscontinually raying down on you, to bless, help, preserve, and watch over you; you may suppose then, for Example, the whole Heavens the Basis of a Pyramidical Figure, through which the full Influences of all these Attributes are passing to and fro, uninterruptedly descending, and falling on you, and your self at the point of it; what can more lively strike your Imagination, to infuse Courage and Resolution, a constant Strength, and firmness of Mind? And then, 'tis but carrying this Pyramidical Cone, through which these infinite Powers are continually influencing and acting on you, along with you in your Fancy, to all the Places where-ever you are, to every *Ubi*, where-soever you remove, the Point fixed to your Head, and the Basis as always supplied with, and gathering in the united Force of the extended Heavens; what can you fear, would you be God! you have all the Power, wonderful Energy and Might, as is included and implied in that All-glorious Name, as constantly attending on you, to Support, Protect, and make you Happy; so that if you are not All-powerful, you are all safe, and consequently may be fearless, if it be not your own fault: Such Expressions as these therefore, what are they but a Weakness; Oh! that I were in such and such a Place, then I should be safe! and so thou art here, timorous Wretch! if God pleases, and he always pleases what is best, for infinite Goodness can design no Ill; for these Your Attributes have no Defects, they don't vary, rise or fall, *Secundum Majus*, or *Minus*; but as they are each Infinite, so they are all infinite, and as one acts infinitely, so the rest;

and

and as they act infinitely in this or that point of Space, so in every one; thus, for Instance of the All-presence (and so of the three other) God is infinitely present here, there, and every where, the nearness of his Being, fills all Things and Places; so that he is by no means less here, because infinitely elsewhere; but *vice versa*, infinitely every where, *ergo*, infinitely here; he is with me in this very Cubb, maugre all these arm'd Redcoats, and so many different, unhappy People of equal Rage and Violence, thirsting after my Blood, as if I was the most remov'd from all Jeopardy and Danger; nay, pleasing my self under the beauteous Heavens, in my usual careless Rambles, full of my wonted Contemplations! for as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is All-mighty, yet we do not say, Three Almightyies, but one Almighty; so each of these four Attributes is infinite, and all are infinite, and act infinitely, as to Time, Persons, and Point of Space, with infinite Power and Vigour, do not flag in one or more Places, because so Operative in others, but infinite every where; yet as we do by no means say, the Number of these Attributes is infinite, because their Powers, Operations and Variations of 'em are so; no, but as all these, are all suppos'd to flow from four infinite Heads, as the proper Source of their several Varieties (all absorb'd in that grand infinite One, God Almighty) so these fountain Heads being nam'd Attributes, we call them no more than four infinite Attributes; suppose then, these four Attributes advanced on high, like so many vast huge Lights, infinite Power, Goodness, Knowledge, and Presence, fix'd aloft in the Air, and a constant Tendency and Rivalry (if I may so speak) in each of them, to dispense the utmost of their blisful Influences on Mankind; one can imagine sure, nothing but ten thousand times

times ten thousand infinite, beatifical, salutiferous Rays, perpetually streaming down on the Heads of the whole human Race, to cheer, secure, support, and make them Happy! how soothing is such a Thought, how enlivening the Idea in General! But then, 'tis only supposing after searching thy own Heart, and being fully conscious of its own Integrity, and of the generous Justice and Goodness of thy own Schemes and Designs, thou should'st artfully form such, as the foregoing Pyramidical Figure to thy own self; by which thou mightest collect all the preceding descending Rays, and so directly centre 'em on my own Head; such an Amusement, how Ravishing is it, how transportive the Thought! for though God is *Commune Bonum*, a common and universal Good, he is equally a particular One; and though the Rays of his infiniteness, are infinitely distended, and employ'd to infinite Uses, I may say infinite Places; yet this nothing hinders, but that the totality of his Infinity, may be fully made use of to Persons Particular; for though God be *Ens infinitum*, he is not a whit the less *Ens unum*, as on the other hand, the Unity of the Deity, does by no means destroy its Infinity; by which means it is, that as the Essence of the Deity is infinite, so his Operations: For the Great God, the ὁ μὴ ὁ ὢν (O with prostrate Reverence, I intreat thee let me adoringly reason of thy all awful Essence!) is all of a Piece; tho' alas! there are no Pieces, *nec Partes, nec accidentie sunt in Deo*, (how then shall I comprehend thee, O thou Incomprehensible, when I have nothing to liken thee to; succumb then into Devotion, and be thou humble Reason, when thou essayest on thy Maker!) as on the other hand, *Nihil finitum cadit in Deum*; by which means 'tis, that as his Essence is Infinite, equally his Operations; There
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are no Degrees in them, its Infinity acts infinitely every where; and if so, how enchanting must such a Meditation be, that all as is contain'd in an Infinite-Almighty, ever-good-God, should point to a Person Particular; solely for his Protection and Happiness! how serenely chearful have such Speculations made me, in whilom times, and how they Regale me now! to which, when I subjoin such Declarations as these, of God's Will and Nature, what can be more Inspiring? As that, he is a Defence for the Oppressed, a Refuge in due time, and a very present help in Trouble; that he maintains and loves Right, and upholds the Righteous, and that when he works, none can let him: That though the Lot is cast into the Lap, the whole disposal is of the Lord; that he is a Well of Life, and that such as delight in him, he will give them their Hearts desire, that all things shall work together for good to them who love God; and that the Salvation of the Righteous, cometh of the Lord: Are not these things, have I thought plain, and do they not convictively prove, than an honest good Man, ought neither to grieve, to be dispirited, or afraid; he being always *ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ* under the shadowing Hand of an all-good and powerful God? Surely they do; so that suppose you had matters of the utmost Consequence, and at the greatest Distance from you; how would you please your self with the Thoughts of some sure stanch Friends there, powerfully to sollicite and to secure your Interest? But a well-grounded Faith enlarges the Soul, unruffles the Brow, and clears all Solitude here; for is not God there, and is he not a true Friend; and more especially to such as please him; will he not take Care for thee; and is not superiour to all thy Enemies; and cannot he

he baffle their Designs? INay, the most trusty Friends could only contrive and perswade, but the Divine Influence reaches much farther; the secret Turnings and Foldings of the Heart are all in his keeping; he over-rules the Will, as also points the very Actions and Designs of Men, even contrary to their Inclinations, if he thinks fit; so that, as to the Game, that little Puppet, Man, does but hold the Box, or cut, shuffle, and deal the Cards, 'tis a superior Power alone as turns up the Main, or wins the Sett: How do I then hug my self now with the Reflex of these Pleasures, I have been used chearfully to enjoy under such blisful Contemplations, when expatiating with a careless Air, in my Country Retirement, my beloved *Horace* in my Hand, ah! that ever charming generous Book; his *Integer Vita's*, his *Vivat extento &c.* his *Splendeat usu &c.* his *Iustum & tenacem propositi virum &c.* his *Aequam memento, robus in arduis servare mentem, &c.* and other his fine Notions being ever and anon my Theme, I have suck'd in the Pleasures of a Celestial Life.

C H E A R then, Blessed Lord, my Spirits now with these Cordials of Refreshment, by the Assistance of thy Grace, I have been long treasuring up; thou art the same Lord always and ever, and thy Arm is not shortened; infuse then the same invigorating Thoughts of thy all-mighty and all-good Power into my Heart at this Juncture, as I have studiously endeavour'd of a long Time to entertain; thou hast taught me, in thy sacred Record, that I should in no wise fear them, who can kill the Body, but him who can destroy both Soul and Body in Hell; let this Precept and Consideration then have its full Weight with, and Effect on me; and I most humbly beseech thee, so to ballast my Soul with the true Poize of thy Grace, as

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that

that on the one side, I may neither be puffed up with vain Conceit, Reliance on myself, or unreasonable and ridiculous Presumption on thee; so on the other, I may never fear, where no Fear is, but by thy Help and Governance may bear myself up with that constant Evenness of Temper, Serenity of Soul, and Resolution of Mind, as may in no wise be unfitting so just a Cause, so merciful a God, and a chearful Spirit; and this I beg for Jesus Christ's Sake. AMEN.



On

On my being deny'd the Sacrament; altho'
 sending two Letters, upon the Occasion,
 to the Secretary's Office, to the Lord
 S---ope, in the most urgent and pres-
 sing manner: The Postscript thus,-----
 You w'ont Heathenize me, sure!----
 But all to no Purpose.

HUM! Gracious Jesu! What an *Easter-Week*
 have I had! As far as 'twas permitted my
 Enemies to discompose me, how unlike was the
 Resurrection-Day, itself spent; that great, that
 highly solemn Day, to my usual happy Course;
 hurrying thro' the Country under a Guard of Pa-
 gan Keepers, whilst I should have been praising
 God in the Beauty of Holiness, adoring him in the
 solemn Mysteries of Religion, and with a dilated
 Joy, expanding myself in the most rapturous Medi-
 tations on a Glorified Saviour! And even now I find,
 I can by no means, be any happier yet, as to any
 spiritual Advantage, as far as these Men can com-
 bine; 'tis well then for me, sure, such are not the
 Door-Keepers of the eternal Mansions, to let in and
 keep out whom they please; did but matters hang
 on that untoward Hinge, after they had hunted
 my wearied Soul, from Place to Place, and at length
 from this Prison, I mean out of this Body of mine,
 (I smile at any other Incarceration, and even this,
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when GOD pleases, I trust, I shall put off for a far brighter Vehicle) as I am sure they will, will but God suffer it to be in their Power; like the Dove let out of the Ark, it should eternally wander seeking Rest but finding none, till thro' Wearisomeness it gasping fell into the suffocating Waters of black *Cocytus*; but Heaven, (cheerful and all-sacred Thought!) blessed be God, is not in their keeping, nor yet in their Master's either, whom they pretend to serve; poor *England*, both Clergy and Laity, has that sable Lot to her Share! But what Course shall I take in this barren Desolateness of outward Means, for a Rise of inward Comfort? the noble Lyon furnishes me with a proper Hint, that illustrious Animal shall be both my Example and Monitor, he lashes himself up when sluggish to brave Resolves and Purposes, by some Throws of my Brain then I will raise my Soul, and by putting my intellectual Faculties a little upon the Sublime, in pleasing but lofty Speculations; by God's Assistance I will endeavour to supply all to my self, to be Altar, Priest, and Sacrifice, and so, at second hand, riot in those delightful Joys and Antitastes of Heaven, a Participation of my Saviour is wont to inspire me with: Lash out then, my Soul, thou winged Messenger, and soar directly upwards, towards the untrod Paths of Heaven; there leisurely survey, with a modest and distant Awe, the All-wondrous *I AM*; let no Anthropomorphite Chimera tinge thy Fancy, but draw in finer Colours; and let his Immensity, his incomprehensible Essence, and all his other (no Word can reach it) Vastnesses, fill thy Mind, and so purifyingly sacrifice it, (nothing else can do it) and from thence draw Matter of constant Wonder and Astonishment, of Admiration and Fear, a most humble Reverence, and prostrate but filial Submission;

mission; and then consider, thou art nothing, or ever wast, or will be, without a Gracious God; or hast any thing, but of, and by him; and supposing his Non-Influence, Non-Irradiation, or Non-Exertion of the Powers of his Infiniteness to thee, but for one Moment; in that very Instant thou wouldst disappear, and drop into thy primitive Annihilation, or State of Non-Existence; and upon all this, tell me what reason hast thou to be proud, thou vain Creature! 'tis the falsest Stroke in all Heraldry; learn then upon this View to be lowly and meek, and to reflect on thy self, as a meer nothing, a Worm, and no Man, and then God will lift thee up, for he gives Grace unto the humble:-----A second Glance, and thou may'st behold thy Saviour; his Body I should now eat, his Blood I should now drink, and so mystically join to, and make myself one with God, 'till lost in spirituous Thoughts, I sunk under the Weight of the too dazzling Abstraction, and so found myself but poor Man; him view with Joy, the most eager Love and full Resolvedness of Imitation; thou may'st shade now thy Colours; we may look at him, as cloathed with Body, for he carried it with him to Heaven, as an earnest of the Exaltation of ours, if it be not our own Fault; but then view him as in the Brilliard'st and most Æthereal Vehicle, made of the finest Mould, fit for such a Soul, fit vitally to be join'd to the purest Divinity, his spotless Innocence, his indefective, sinless Perfections, could deserve no less, (that Man, we may say without Offence, was truly meriting) fitting as in the most lovely and majestic Form, on a bright burnish'd Throne, sparkling, glistening, radiant Glories diffused all around him, Ten thousand times Ten thousand Saints, and cherubimical prostrate Angels, worshipping and casting their Crowns at his splendid

splendid Feet, and saying, worthy art thou, O! Lamb of God, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, with thy blood, out of every Nation, Kindred, and people, and Tongues, and hast made us unto our God, Kings and Priests, and we shall reign upon the Earth! And in this Light whilst thou view'st him, as reaching out a golden Crown, and with extended Arms offering a rich Garland of Bays, and of immarcessable Laurels, sweetly wavering in the Air, as the sure Reward of Victory, to animate and quicken every loyal Soldier, who has lifted under the Baptismal Banner, the Cross of Christ, and taken a lawful Abjuration Oath; the last, to set at under Defiance, the usurping Devil, to quit claim to the World, and all its gilded Vanities, and, oh! never to succumb to the Allurements of Sin; as on the other hand, ne'er to forsake his Colours, or desert his Liege Lord; but courageously to follow, and heroically and indefinitely to press, and push forward after him, his warlike Leader, in all those Paths of true Bravery he has gone before him in, how rough and crimson, or uneven soever; and so to hew out his Way to Heaven, that where his Captain is now enthroned, to triumph for evermore, he may ascend also: 'Tis but imagining both the Crown and the Laurels gently bend to thee, and court thee to a reception; (as indeed they are designed for, and held out to all) what Spirit, what Courage, must this diffuse throughout thy Soul, not to fall short?— And whilst thou hast thus a fixed Eye on him, the Heir Glory, and Captain of thy Salvation, and who by his truly great, and heroic Actions, atchiev'd Wonders, and led Captivity Captive; how should this warm, nay, inspire thee, to obtain the same Prize; gallantly, by the most persevering, undaunted, and modestly daring Acts, in Christian Chivalry, to bid up

up for the same Reward, by acting a like Part? by entire Resignation to the Will of God, and depending on his Goodness, ah, lovely Thought! by Patience in the sharpest and worst of Circumstances, and Contentedness in the meanest and most destitute Condition, for such oftentimes the Son of God's was; and in being chearfully willing to submit to the unkindest Lot, and to engage the hardest Fortune, provided by thy Sufferings thou mayst do Service to the World, and probably do good in't; such rever'd Hints and Suggestions, how may they improve thy Soul, mount its Wings upward, and so clear thy Way, towards a glorious Immortality!— And if to this, thou addest Thoughts of another Nature, what Christ endur'd and suffer'd for thee on Earth, tho' Lord and Head, and King of all, the universal Sovereign, Potentate, and Almighty of the World, to be despis'd and rejected of Men, to be a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Griefs, to have a Price set upon his Head, by his own Subjects, and in consequence of that, to be abjured by one Servant, deserted by all, and betray'd by the very worst, (tho' even his so dark and sunk a Soul, in no wise incapable of the Divine Pity, but in that he willfully lost himself in the Gulph of a resolv'd Covetousness, and so willingly foreclos'd his own Redemption!) and at length ignominiously and barbarously crucified, and put to an open and shameful Death; and this for no other end, from first to last, by all these Sufferings and baptizings in his own Sweat and Blood, but to pay the Price for thee, to redeem thee, from the cursed Effects and Consequents of Sin and Hell, and to make thee *rectus in Curia*, obtain a favourable Glance of God's Eye for thee, and so render thee capable of eternal Bliss, and then to set thee in the true and right Way to it! How should this engage thy Soul, transport and
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enamour it, with the sweetest Tastes and Gusts of Love; as on the other hand, alarm all thy Faculties, and set them constantly on the Watch, to guard and fence against his and thy Enemies, least they surprize thee into Obliquity, and so thou missest, and forfeit, that Reward, which, with so much Toil and Labour, he has purchas'd for thee? how highly useful may such Speculations be now, in this Dryness of Consolation, this Ebb of all outward Solace; and of what everlasting and continued Advantage and Emolument: Souldst thou now, by God's Blessing, but bravely resolve, from this time forward, and for ever hereafter, that the whole Circle of Virtues, shall be the Square of thy Actions, thy Life the constant Counterpart of the most exact Copy, becoming perfect, as God is perfect, and perpetually aspiring after greater Degrees, and making farther Advances, and walking larger strides of Purity and Refinement? What shall I say, but that happy me, that I have been Afflicted! and so, this lonesom gloomy Den, or rather Grave, as to any outward Pleasure, may providentially become a means of a glorious Resurrection, to a more Divine, Heavenly and Spiritual Life: And then amidst these Essays, and whilst thou art humbly craving aid of that All-blessed Spirit, shouldst thou but address thy self singly to the Holy Ghost, as a Person Distinct, in the sacred Trinity, and otherwise, recollect his wondrous Operations, in all Ages; the absolute necessity of his Co-operating with us; as on the other hand, our wisely striking in, with his indulgent Offers; his preventing, and farthering Grace, to make our crude Works acceptable, and sanctifie our indigested Actions, and that without his Aid, 'tis impossible to be saved, but we must be for ever lost, and undone to all Eternity; how should these Considerations cause our Souls to
 Flame,

flame, and blow us up, into an holy Ardour, to
 supplicate his Divine Influences, to melt down our
 corrupted Natures, and Recoin them into the Divine
 Image; and when this grand Boon may be had for
 asking, so Inestimable, but withal, so absolutely
 necessary a Blessing, at so cheap a rate, so Humili-
 ty, and a modest bent to Wisdom, be but the ushe-
 rs up of this Petition; how should we resolve to
 be Importunate, and never to give over Wrestling
 with this Heavenly Paraclete, till he bless us also,
 illuminate and vivify our dark lifeless Natures?
 And upon the whole, when thou viewest God un-
 der these three Appellations of Creator, Redeem-
 er, and Sanctifier; that at first, we were made to
 be happy, but soon forfeited; that God, the Just
 or the Unjust, must then die, otherwise we must
 remain ruin'd; and that Redemption even by the
 death of God, would, nay, could not, be totally
 effectual, as far as we knew, unless another Royal
 person, the blessed Spirit in the Holy Trinity,
 drew in, his magnificent Quota likewise, to perfect,
 and finish our Salvation; we being, alas! after Re-
 demption, but like so many blind Cripples, in view
 of a most beautiful and ravishing City, without ei-
 ther Eyes or Legs to see our way, or travel to it;
 and that God, even in this last Crisis, stepped in,
 and made good the Delect; so that each Person,
 in this mysterious and adorable Alliance, out of
 the inexhaustible Fountain of their Communica-
 tion, All-kind-Good-Nature, seem'd anxious to
 make us happy, to endear, and aggrandize, and
 render us as Gods, and to join, and unite us to
 himself, and to make us sharers of their Glories, if
 may so speak, and Heirs, and Coheirs with them
 ever; how should this exalt our Hearts to the
 most heights of Gratitude, inflame our Minds
 and Souls, with an Extacy of pious, and filial Love,
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and Duty, till like a Torrent, we overflowed into everlasting Praises, quick, solemn, and never-ceasing Hallelujahs, and were inflexibly resolved, never to displease, or disobey so generous, and munificent a Master, should all the Powers of the most alluring sinful Charms, ever so much enchant us to the contrary; or the Devil, by a cast of his quick skill in Opticks, represent to us, in one intoxicating Moment, all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glories of them, to withdraw our Souls from God, or to debauch us in our sworn Allegiance from so glorious a Commander. But stop, and descend my Soul, and let us pause a little. methinks I hear a Tempest in thy Breast; sure even now, 'tis not all Sunshine within; and whilst any Fog or Mist envelops the bright Traveller of thy Day, thou may'st justly fear, 'tis wander'd Excentrick; or stranded on a colder Beach, than what 'twas made to coast on! Ah! the irascible Phalaris is up in Arms, against those cruel, unmanly Creatures, as debarr'd thee of the Sacrament! here then, there is work for repeated Reflections; least whilst by wise Resolves, and Holy Speculations on way, thou gallantly push, and defeat the Enemy in Front, by some wile Ambuscade he enclose thee behind, and so surprise thee, into a disgraceful Rout by thy too eager Precipitancy; for whilst the least uneasiness or disquietude hovers over thee with depend on it, if 'tis not matter of Body, (and then alas, too too often,) 'tis either a Sin, or verging to one! Rein back then thine Anger, from those unthinking, irreligious Ones, who stop'd up thy way to this ravishing Feast; and let it loose on thy self for thy many Imperfections: The Royal Martyr thou knowest, was deny'd the joyous Comfort of his Chaplains; compose then thy self; and as he prayed for his Murderers, so do thou submissive

ly intercede for these obstinate Heathen-makers ; is the Servant greater than his Lord ; art thou above the immortal STUARTS ; and is this a time for the Priesthood to be favoured ? Tune up then the Jarring String within, and metamorphize thy Fire ; and from Wrath, let it distil into gentle Compassion, for these thy Enemies ; for sure they know not what they do. Mischiefs too, are to be rated in some measure, by the intention of the doer ; this then may be very small, as far as thou knowest, with relation to thee, should the Agent be Judge ; and Charity, thou know'st, hopes the best : All Thoughts, are not as thy Thoughts ; were it so, Matters possibly towards thee, might be carried on, with an Air more obliging : For how many are there, who look only, on the Eucharist, as a Qualification for a Place ; and so oftentimes, make the God of inflexible Right, but as subservient to the Ends of a Tyrant or Usurper ? Others make a Jest of it ; and some, when they receive, play only the wellbred Gentleman, in being civil to an establish'd Custom ; may not these then, be the Notions of the new-dubb'd Lord in this Case ; and so he looke on thy passionate earnestness in this Matter, only as the more covertly acting the Droll with a better Grace in a grave way ? These guesses may be Rational ! Wast thou but warm'd therefore, with a true Sense, of the worth of an invaluable Soul, thy Fire would be expressed, in quite another manner, towards these unhappy Latitudinarians, these unbelievers in Religion ; in the utmost Pity, and Compassion, for their unthinking, lethargick Condition, and in the most fervent Intercession, for their desperate State ; and so thou art doubly call'd upon, to address thy self to Heaven :

Cheer therefore my Soul, most Benign God, with the Rays of thy Spirit; and since I cannot, I must not receive the visible Symbols of thy Body, thy cruel Death, and Passion, and Blood, gushing out thereupon for me; let the effect be, according to what I can, not according to what I cannot; and may my ardent Breathings, after the sensible Blessing, produce equal Degrees of Consolation, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, and Forgiveness with the Reception itself; may'st thou be, *all in all* to me, and *all in every part*: Cleanse my Heart, and rectify my Head; dart thy self into my Mind, and wholly diffuse thy spiritual Powers throughout my Soul; that it may be *all, Light, all Divine, all Pure, all Holy*: may thy unlimited Grace, and Favour, supply *all to me*, and be thou Priest, Altar, Sacrifice, and every good, and perfect Work to me; so that, thou purifying my Heart, and regulating my Head, by thy constant Residence, (the glorious and enchanting Idea, to have a God keep Court in thee!) they may always be, as a limpid Fountain, a most chearful, overflowing Spring, of select Meditations, and useful, at least, innocent Thoughts; of celestial Affections, and well regulated Passions, perpetually streaming forth, in every thing, as is comely, praiseworthy, and of good Report, and from thence most harmoniously shewing themselves in all the different Economies of a well-laid, well-tuned, and well-acted Life; till in the blissful expectation of seeing thee, even as we are seen; viewing thee in the most intimate, but awful Manner, and contemplating thy Glories, with the most wishful Pleasure, my Powers, being all absorbed in thee; my Will, my Affections, my Understanding, my Heart, my Soul, being all one in thee, as thou art one; I shall triumphantly arrive, where every thing as is in Part, shall be done

done away ; and nothing but what is perfect, shall remain ; and this I beg, for Jesus Christ his sake.

And since gracious Lord, thou hast taught us by thy Apostle, that all, even our brightest Deeds, without Charity, are nothing worth ; perfect in me, by thy Grace, that most blessed Gift : teach me to have a generous and disinterested concern for the whole Race of Mankind ; and not to despise or undervalue the Meanest : We, are all, from one grand Representative, *Adam* ; learn me then, to love, and regard, and endear all Mankind, as Brethren : as my endeavours therefore, so let my constant Prayers, be also to the Throne of Mercy, for the Advantages, and eternal Advancements of my Fellow-Creatures ; and, as thy Eyes are over all the Earth, O good God, so withdraw not thy renewing Influences from the coldest, even the worthleſt of Mankind ; let not Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Hereticks, be without thy Compassion, and that, I know, works by Love ; but let even Freethinkers, Deists, and even the secret Atheist himself, be under thy Divine warmth ; shew thy utmost upon them, I most humbly beseech thee, O Lord, for Good ; and if, in the possibilities of Nature and Grace, it pleases thy All-kind Wisdom, stop them short in their full Career to the bottomless Bit ; let them not go on, to add Infidelity to Incogitancy, to a Reprobate and undisciplined Mind, Malice ; at least, O Lord, to their Rancour and Inveteracy, not a final, persevering, and decisive Impenitency ; but let the utmost of thy extended Arm be stretched out to them, to reduce them to thy self, most Powerful God : enlighten their Understandings, and direct them to Truth ; streighten their crooked Wills, that they may choose Salvation ; sanctify their Hearts, and refine their mundane Affections, that

that they may raise them to loftier Objects; remove from them, all Perverseness, Obstinacy, and Hardness of Heart; and introduce in their stead those delightful and seraphick Qualifications, as may manuduce them towards Heaven; that so their Intellects comprehending, their Wills embracing and approving, and their Passions biasing them, towards those things, as are most excellent, all the Truths of that sacred, beautiful, and solemn thing, call'd Religion, both natural and revealed, may appear before them, with such convincing Evidence, and innate Loveliness and Uniformity, as may attract their Desires, and storm and win their Understandings, that so their Scepticisms, Follies, and Prejudices gently melting down before the sweet and engaging Violence, they may be snatch'd as a Brand out of the Fire, and bring forth such Fruits as are meet for Repentance, that so becoming reasonable Members of Christ's Church, they may gradually ripen to greater Perfection, and cordially abound in every good and honest Word and Deed, 'till the Almighty Power has finished his Work in them, and this I beg for his Sake alone, who made and redeemed us by dying for us, even Christ our Lord. **AMEN.**

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FINIS.